

Senate Resolution No. 9

Introduced by Senators Mitchell and Hall

Relative to Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

WHEREAS, One hundred years after the Emancipation Proclamation, on August 28, 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and others organized hundreds of thousands of blacks and whites, Jews and gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, in a march to the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC where Dr. King made his famous “I Have a Dream” speech announcing that the days of segregation in the United States were numbered; and

WHEREAS, Monday, January 19, 2015, marks the 29th national celebration of the national holiday for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his fight for civil and human rights; and

WHEREAS, On Thursday, January 15, 2015, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. would have been 86 years of age; and

WHEREAS, On April 10, 1970, California became the first state to pass legislation making Dr. King’s birthday a school holiday and, subsequently, a statewide holiday; and

WHEREAS, Representative John Conyers (D-Michigan) submitted the first legislation for a national Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, which was signed into law by President Ronald Wilson Reagan, on November 2, 1983; and

WHEREAS, January 20, 1986, marked the first observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; and

WHEREAS, Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement helped change public policy from segregation to integration, resulting in the repeal of the post-Reconstruction era state laws mandating racial segregation in the South known as the “Jim Crow Laws,” thereby leading to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and other antidiscrimination laws aimed at ending economic, legal, and social segregation in America; and

WHEREAS, Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement helped change public policy from legal and socially acceptable discrimination and segregation to an open and accessible policy of racial integration leading

to equal participation and access to primary and higher education, housing, employment, transportation, federal, state, and local governmental elections, and other aspects of public policy relating to human rights; and

WHEREAS, These public policy changes at the national level influenced many changes in California that culminated in the passage of the Unruh Civil Rights Act and the Rumford Fair Housing Act, in open enrollment and access to higher education specifically with respect to the California State University and the University of California, and in employment and labor laws, transportation policy, election laws, and other aspects of public policy; and

WHEREAS, The unfinished business of Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement was and is the plight of the poor, the fight against war and for worldwide peace, and the struggle for a fair, equitable, and sensible economic system; and

WHEREAS, Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement noted that a majority of Americans lived below the poverty line, and that the huge income gaps between rich and poor called for “changes in the structure of our society”; and

WHEREAS, Dr. King, in the last months of his life, began organizing a Poor People’s Campaign to, among other things, assemble “a multiracial army of the poor that would descend on Washington—engaging in nonviolent civil disobedience at the Capitol, if need be—until Congress enacted a poor people’s bill of rights”; and

WHEREAS, All of the aforementioned concerns and more continue to be the quest of civil and human rights organizations in the great State of California, across America, and throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. fought to change public policy from the “self-inflicted wound of segregation to the pluralistic diverse democracy” we continue to construct today; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement serve as a model for principled leadership and forward-thinking, bipartisan public policy; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, That Monday, January 19, 2015, be observed as the official memorial of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birth and his work in the Civil Rights Movement; and be it further

Resolved, That this day, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement be commemorated for their help in changing public policy from segregation to integration, for the betterment of this, the

great State of California and these United States of America; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate encourages all Americans to pay tribute to the life and works of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. through participation in community service projects on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate recognizes the inherent value of community service and volunteerism in the creation of a civil society and as a means of nonviolent community progress consistent with the works of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate recognizes the benefits of the collaborative work by many organizations that promote, facilitate, and carry out needed service projects nationwide; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate encourages its members and colleagues to urge their constituents to participate in community service projects; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate acknowledges that, by serving one's country, one's community, and one's neighbor, our nation makes progress in civility, equality, and unity consistent with the values and life's work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

Senate Resolution No. 9 read and adopted by the Senate January 16, 2015.

Attest: _____
Secretary of the Senate